

THE CONFESSIONS  
OF  
HENRY  
HOOTER  
THE THIRD

POEMS FOR OWLISH CHILDREN

*by*  
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ORIGINAL WRITING

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Sadly the dawn light seeps from the skies  
He closes his eyes

Counts black sheep  
Cannot sleep.

"I am tired of being wise ...  
I'm not wise. It's all lies!

"I am just a foolish bird  
My name is Henry Hooter the Third.

"With a name like that I could be clever?  
What a hoot (bless my word!) - did you ever?"

He opens his eyes  
Thinks: "Me? Wise?"

"I've a big surprise for you all:  
I am as wise as a brick wall!"

Now that he's said all he wanted to say  
Henry Hooter goes to sleep for the day.

## THE VERTICAL-TAKE-OFF SPARROW

The vertical-take-off sparrow -  
A creature that seldom is seen;  
Up he goes like an arrow -  
They call him "The Flying Machine".

He whirrs when about to take off -  
But how to describe it... that sound!  
Say a hundred gnus were to cough  
(If a hundred gnus could be found).

## SICK CANARY

My canary is sick  
And refuses to sing,  
He turns up his nose  
At the food I bring  
And his eyes grow dim  
Grow dim, grow dim  
And nobody knows  
What's the matter with him.

I wish he could speak ...  
Can't you open your beak?  
Poor little thing! He's far too weak.

## THE CORKSCREW-BIRD

The corkscrew-bird has a very funny nose  
With which it makes holes in trees,  
A funny old nose which it never ever blows  
Except when about to sneeze.

The corkscrew-bird is born in mid-June  
(And sometimes, too, in May)  
Try as it might it can't sing in tune  
But it hopes to ... one fine day.

## GOOSE TO GREENLAND GOING

The brent goose eyes a passing cloud:  
"I'm leaving tomorrow  
No cause for sorrow!"  
Chill wind cries aloud.

Greenland calls to the brent goose, time to go,  
Nothing has changed  
Her flight is arranged  
No time to lose come hail, come snow.

How I -wish she'd take me there  
To Greenland through the honking air!

## CONNEMARA CHILD

An insect chirps in the meadow  
Like a bicycle coming down the road,  
I'm not afraid of the bumble bee,  
The asses cry with their heavy load.

Mama's shawl is warm,  
Father's pants are wide,  
If ever I'm in trouble  
I know where I can hide.

Uncle is mending a currach,  
How I love the smell of the tar!  
The lake at the end of the breen -  
Silvery as a star.

I like the cows black as turf, That stream - no depth at all;  
Sheep have dye-marks, blue and red, Ponies never grow tall.

## LATE AGAIN!

Lightning flashes daub the sky,  
Crow is flying at his level best;  
"Caw! What a storm - can hardly fly,  
Hardly see ... damn, where's my nest?"

"What am I doing at this time of night,  
Lightning ripping the sky in two;  
I'm a fool, you know - head is gone light,  
Wife will be mad. What will I do?"

## OLD FROG

Down in a hole in a bog Lived an old, old, old, old frog.  
He was old, he was cold, All covered in mould  
And breakfasted mostly on fog.

## YAKITY YAK

The yak  
Carries lots of things  
On his back  
And as he trundles  
He tumbles and mumbles  
Singing  
“So many bundles!  
Alack!”

## THE DEPTHS OF HENRY HOOTER

Henry Hooter has a pain in his head,  
“Should I get up, or stay here in bed?  
Should I be single, or should I be wed?”  
His head feels heavy - heavy as lead.

Henry Hooter has just had a thought,  
It flew out his ear and was only half caught:  
“All life,” he said, “is with something fraught,  
Wisdom’s a something ... something - something  
bought.”

Henry Hooter opened a book,  
“What a load of codswollop! Look, just look!”  
With laughter and anger his whole frame  
shook -  
“From start to finish it’s gobbledegook!”

Henry Hooter says the world has gone mad:  
“Just have a look at it! Terribly sad!  
Everyone asking what’s the latest fad -  
By heavens, I hope it’s not me - egad!”

Henry Hooter nods off to sleep,  
Sleeping deeply he lies in a heap,  
Deeply sleeping till the first stars peep,  
Mumbling sweetly “How come I’m so deep?”

## POEM FOUND IN A SINK

Squids spurt ink  
Philosophers think  
Psychiatrists shrink  
Skunks stink  
Owls wink  
What's a fink?  
    Don't know. But flamingos are pink  
And lemmings fall over the brink  
Into the drink:  
Is it some kind of kink?  
    Don't know. But foxes slink  
And a chain is as weak as its strongest link.  
Is it wrong to wear mink?  
    Don't know. But skaters skate in a rink  
Glasses clink  
Coins chink  
Zn stands for zinc  
Some girls prink  
And as far as I know fish don't blink.

## WADDLE

I am a little penguin  
And I waddle when I run:  
Widdle wuddle waddle -  
Gosh, it's so much fun!

I waddle in the morning  
When the day begins to break  
And I waddle in the night-time  
Just to keep myself awake!

My dad's a powerful waddler -  
Twice Waddler of the Year,  
The judges said he must have had  
A fourth or fifth gear!

## STICK-IN-THE-MUD-SPUD

"That old Spud's a proper stick-in-the-mud,"  
Says red-lipped Cherry. "Not talking to him  
anymore!"

Spud hears this and is hurt to the core.  
Suddenly - thud!  
Next thing you know he's lying on the floor.

All the fruit and vegetables gather round to  
view the scene.  
"Dead or alive?" asks Parsnip. "Hmm ... let's  
see," says Garden Pea,  
"I wonder ... hmm ...what do you think Broad  
Bean?"  
"Nothing serious, just badly shook if you ask  
me!"

"Spud! Darling! It's me - Cherry. I'm awfully  
sorry! (Can he hear?)  
Said awfully sorry! Friends? So silly to fight!"  
Spud opens a watery eye: "Forgive you this  
time, my dear."  
"Oh, so happy!  
Tell me Spud ... anything - er -  
cooking tonight?"

## AN INVITATION TO DISCUSS LIFE WITH AN EEL

You think because I'm just an eel  
I don't feel?

I feel! As do lizards, newts and rats  
And vampire bats!  
You think because you see no tears  
I've got no hopes, no dreams, no fears?

I fear, I dream, I hope,  
My dreams are slipperier than soap.

What do you think I'm made of? Jelly?  
Oh, what's the point! Go watch telly!



## NATIONAL ANTHEM (NEARLY) FOR NEPAL

"I think not,"  
Says the Nepalese Apricot  
"I think not..."

"What?  
Hey, Apricot!  
Think not what?"

"No, I think not,"  
Says the Apricot  
"I think not..."

"That there Apricot  
Sure does think a lot!"

"I think not,"  
Says the Apricot  
"I think not..."

## LARRY THE LOCUST

Larry the Locust  
Is fond of his swarm  
"Keeps me warm."

Larry the Locust  
Plies here and there  
"Most everywhere."

Larry the Locust  
Could never live alone  
No mind of his own.

Larry the Locust  
There he goes!  
Which one is he?  
Nobody knows.

## TO KATAWANGADOO - AND BACK!

Where bananas straighten out by the hour  
And the stinging coconut slowly loses its hair,  
Have you been there?  
I was - I swear!

Nuts there swell, shiver and grow sour,  
Sad gorillas stare  
At aero-bats sailing backwards through the air -  
For a dare!

Swamps giggle as fish cower,  
Sly crocodiles, weeping, glare  
At snide parrots who don't give a care  
Because there's zillions of them there.

Slimy waterfalls freeze, stumpy giraffes glower  
And whistle a soft tune - so sweet and rare -  
Before ... splat! They tumble into the spider's  
snare:  
YES, I WAS THERE!

## GOOSEBERRY

I no longer want to be a gooseberry!  
But wouldn't it be merry - very -  
To be a duckberry, -what?  
I'd like that a quacking lot!  
Or a turkeyberry for that matter  
And never run out of chatter.  
A swanberry - yes, that would be nice.  
A swanberry - cool as ice:  
With cygnetberries all in a row  
Waiting to turn into snow.  
Anything! Anything but a gooseberry!  
I'm nothing but a hairy what's-the-use-berry!

## CHOPPED CARROT

The Carrot woke up  
To the sound of a slicing scream;  
Old Turnip spoke up:  
“Young Carrot there’s having a dream.”

The following night  
Carrot woke up as before;  
Turnip was right  
“I’m afraid you’re a bit of a bore!”

“Help! Help! It’s a rabbit!”  
“Oh, shut it!” says Turnip, “this is becoming a  
habit!”

## WHAT THE WEASEL PAINTED

There were snails  
on rails  
and mice  
on ice.  
Dogs, hogs  
and frogs  
in clogs -  
floundering in bogs.  
Gnus  
in pointed shoes  
(their tootsies wall bruise).  
Llamas  
in striped pyjamas.  
Asses  
with glasses.  
Chimps  
with limps -  
such imps!  
Cats, rats  
and bats  
in spats.  
Yaks  
in plastic macs -  
(soaked to the bone,  
all all alone,  
they groan,  
all trying to use the phone:

Hallo? Hallo? Ochone!)  
Two fighting cocks  
a stray fox  
something rather like an ox.  
A papoose  
riding a moose  
and a goose  
with a screw loose.  
And there with his easel  
Wilfred the Weasel  
painting a sun as small as a measle!

## THE ASPARAGUS IS LEARNING FRENCH

The Asparagus is learning French  
Ouil Out! and s'il vous plait;  
The Jerusalem artichoke says "Mensch!  
She getting crazier by the day!"

Nobody knows what she's saying,  
She's been at this now for a week:  
"Please stop this s'il vous plaiting  
Or I'll speak Welsh!" says the leek.

## HEDGY

Hedgy the Hedgehog  
Is crossing the road,  
I sure hope he makes it  
And lives to be old:  
"Come on Hedgy, hop it!"  
He stops dead cold ...  
"Hop it?" says Hedgy,  
I'm not a bloomin' toad!"

## WHAT DID YOU SLAY?

Miss Orange has a stutter,  
Or, should one say a splutter?  
It annoys Professor Apple  
Who, as you know, is trying to grapple  
With the flutterfly...  
Oh my!

Stand back if you please, Miss Orange - back!  
Out of my way!  
Slorry, Professor Zapple, what did - what did  
you slay?

## POLAR BEAR

A polar bear once went to sea  
On a morning as cold as could be,  
“This ice-floe,’ he felt  
Is unlikely to melt...”  
But it did - when he went for a pee.

## ONION

The onion’s eyes are streaming  
The tears drip down his nose  
His two little ears are beaming  
And this is how his story goes:

Oh woe is me.  
Oh me is woe.  
Look at that bunion  
On my toe.

Poor onion!

## NOW IT’S SNOWING

s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s
s	s	s

N O w

## PRE-MARITAL TENSION

Henry Hooter is tired of mice:

“Put them on ice!

Put them on ice!”

Henry Hooter won’t touch a fly:

“I’d rather die!

I’d rather die!”

Henry Hooter is fed up with life:

“I need a wife!

I need a wife!”

So he puts an ad in *The Owltime Review*:

LOOKING FOR A MISSUS. COULD IT BE YOU? REPLIES IN CONFIDENCE. TO-WHIT! TO-WHO!
---

## LITTER-BUG

Litter-bug litter-bug

Where have you been?

“Scattering rubbish -

I’m ever so keen!

Down by the waterfront

Up in the green

Searching for places

Still tidy and clean.

Well I’ve made such a mess

It’s just got to be seen!”

Litter-bug litter-bug

You’re mean

Real mean.

## SOS LOST WHALE!

Far out in the sea lived a whale

With a great dashing lashing big tail.

It smashed as it bashed

And it crashed as it slashed

And it flashed - and got lost in the gale!

## MISS PEAR

Miss Pear! Miss Pear!  
Miss Pear is in despair  
(She's really very sad!)  
Miss Pear! Miss Pear!  
Miss Pear - don't despair!  
It can't be all that bad.

Miss Pear! Miss Pear!  
Miss Pear! She doesn't care  
(She's really glum!)  
Miss Pear! Miss Pear!  
She needs some air -  
She's hopelessly in love with Mr Plum.

And this - this Plum? (Now that she has made  
her heart bare).  
The wretch! "But all I wanted was to peel Miss  
Pear!"

## GROWING PAINS IN ONE KNEE

How would you like to be  
a weenshy little flea  
a weenshy little flea  
with a pain in one knee?

His knee is so small  
he can't see it at all  
"Is it growing pains I have?" says he.

Weenshy little flea  
try a compress of cold tea  
it works. Always worked for me.

"Hm... Maybe..."  
sighs the flea.  
"You see  
what's worryin' me  
is I'm in agony  
but, golly gee,  
only in the one knee ..."

Spare a little thought for the fleas ...  
their little knees

## THE FIRE-EATING MOTH

The fire-eating moth is a sucker for fame  
And dances and jumps to applause,  
“There’s nothing,” he says, “to compare with a  
flame,”  
(Which he chews without using his jaws).

A remarkable fellow, the fire-eating moth,  
He has never been scorched, as of yet ...  
Except once and he yelled: “This flame is thoo  
hoth!”  
Geth me a drink - one that’s weth!”

## LATE AGAIN! (YET AGAIN)

It’s two o’clock in the morning,  
The crow has lost his way,  
His wife in her sleep is turning,  
Very soon it will be day!

At last he’s found his nest,  
He snuggles so quietly in:  
When, nestling up to her breast,  
Suddenly - there’s an awful din!

“Caw Caw! He’s back! He’s back! He’s back!  
Caw Caw!” They sing and jeer.  
“Sorry,” he says, “night was so black!  
Breakfast in bed, my dear?”



## CABBAGE

I think I've got a slug, said the Cabbage,  
Something's crawling over me,  
Try to get it out .. can you manage?  
Oh, please hurry Mr Chicory.

I'm doing my best, says Chicory. Lord above!  
It's not a slug you've got - it's two!  
And if I'm not mistaken, they seem to be in  
    love -  
No, not with one another, dear - with you!

## CANUTE

"Nobody ever talks to me,"  
says poor Canute Cucumber.  
"Nobody takes a walk with me  
or says I'm a cute Cucumber.

"What on God's earth can one do?  
One feels so terribly green;  
Must one wait till one's twenty-two  
Before one is heard of or seen?

"Nobody ever talks to me,  
I wonder is it my name?  
Nobody takes a walk with me  
Really, you know, it's a shame!"

## WUFF

Dark...  
Dogs bark ...  
I hear them howl,  
Growl...

WUFF!

What are they saying?  
What are they baying?

Wuff! Wuff-wuff!

Wuff!

You'd think by now they'd had enough

## AULD LANG SYNE

“Who is crying over there?”  
“Who disturbs the evening air?”  
“Pineapple, is it you?  
Are you blue?”

“Tell us what’s wrong!”

“I pine ... I pine for a song...”

“Oh pineapple! Silly, silly! Why pine?  
Let us all sing, *Auld Lang Syne!*”

## SHADY BANANA

“Dr Spinach will see you now, Mr Banana,  
Step right this way please.”  
“Thank you Miss Parsley - I - I mean Anna -  
Excuse me I’m going to sn- sneeze!”

“Well well, Mr Banana - let’s see how you look.  
Still green with envy, poor sod:  
Take to your bed and read a good book -  
The Koran, the Bible - anything, by God!”

## SEA BEE

There once was a small honey bee  
Went out on the wide open sea,  
Flying for hours  
Searching for flowers -  
It never came back for its tea.

## PROFESSOR X GOES SPLAT!

Professor X does not agree  
With either colleague, A or B:  
“No no no, it cannot be ...  
You see ...”

Professor B swallows a pill.  
He has truly had his fill.  
Professor X he'd like to kill.  
“Someday I will,” he says, “I will.”

Professor A just stares ahead,  
Hasn't heard a word's been said.  
Got out wrong side of bed,  
Only half alive, half dead ...

Professor X says: “Well, that's that...”  
Goes to put on scarf and hat.  
Professor A says: “Look, a rat!”  
Hits him with his brolly - splat!

## THE CAUTIONARY TALE OF THE HORSERADISH

The Pumpkin laughed out loud:  
“I don't mind being fat at all,  
I sometimes feel like a cloud  
Or like snow that's about to fall.”

“I see,” Horseradish replied,  
“Well, that's fine for you, I suppose;  
As for me, I could grow if I tried ...  
Want to see? Alright - here goes!”

So he blew and he blew and he blew  
And got terribly red in the face,  
And he grew and he grew and he grew  
And went POP! (without leaving a trace).

## CHARLES THE WOODWORM

Charles the woodworm  
is sitting for his exam:  
“So many types of wood  
all I can say is DAMN!  
Coniferous... deciduous...  
always mix up the two.  
Oh, the world would be a forest  
if we'd no exams to do.”

## BULLY

The Italian tomato, Tomasi, is going around  
depressed:  
“Oh, what a bully, that coconut. I’ll tear all the  
hair off his chest!”

“Si, si,” says the Spanish lemon, “I agree -  
damn his hide.”  
Shall we open him up, amigo? I’m sure he is  
milky and watery inside!”

## HARRY

Harry the ant  
He wore no clothes  
No clothes  
No clothes at all!  
I can’t  
I can’t  
Said Harry the ant ...  
Why? Sure nobody knows.  
No clothes  
No clothes  
He wore no clothes  
He wore no clothes at all.  
What did he wear?  
He wore a rose  
At the Earwig’s Fancy Ball.

## DOLLY THE DONKEY DANCES, AGAIN

I have trimmed my eyebrows and lashes too,  
Put powder all over my nose,  
Painted my lips a fashionable blue  
To match my toes.  
Let us dance, sweet jackass, me and you  
In our best clothes:  
You are fragrant and gentle - rain on a rose -  
You know that I love you - I do!

## US VOLES

We’re not very common, said the Vole,  
In fact one might say we are rare,  
Don’t expect us in any old hole -  
There are few of us voles to spare.

Our club is well known - *The Élite* -  
MEMBERS ONLY PLEASE!  
We frown upon smelly feet  
And voles that don’t know how to sneeze!

## MULE

Don't call me a mool  
To rhyme with a stool  
I'm a mule -  
Fool!  
MULE!

Did I hear you say mool?  
You can jump in a pool!  
I'm a mule -  
Ghoul!  
MULE!

So you think it's real cool  
To call me a mool -  
Were you never at school?  
Fool!  
I'M A MULE!

## HENRY HOOTER HAD A FLEA

Henry Hooter had a flea,  
He pecked at it and hurt his knee:  
"I greatly fear, I greatly fear  
This flea might end up in my ear!"

Henry Hooter had a flea,  
It tickled him: "Oo! Hee-hee!  
Little flea, please go away  
And don't come back another day."

Henry Hooter had a flea,  
"Why pick on me? Flea, why me?  
Where are you flea? Speak up! Where?  
Damn your hide! It just ain't fair!"

Henry Hooter had a flea,  
He pecked at it and hurt his knee:  
"I greatly fear, I greatly fear  
This flea might vanish up my rear!"

## FIRST

Who was the first to blow his nose?  
Who was the first to tip his toes?  
Who the first to pluck a rose?  
Who first scratched his head?  
Who first baked bread?  
Who first fell out of bed?  
Who was the first to sail a ship?  
Who was the first to bite his lip?  
Who the first to swallow a pip?  
Who first milked a cow?  
Who first enquired how?  
Who first learned to bow?  
Who was the first to dream a dream?  
Who was the first to scream a scream?  
Who the first to whip cream?  
Who first climbed a hill?  
Who first - Jack or Jill?  
Who first paid a bill?  
Who was the first to never say "Blast!"  
Who was the first to break a fast?  
Who the first to come in last?

## THE RETURN OF THE DODO

You thought I was dead!  
Well I'm back,  
seeing red!

Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!

I was hiding all along...  
Now my friends,  
Here's my song:  
Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!  
Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!

I hid under a rock,  
I hid under a tree,  
I said to myself:  
'They're not going to get me!'  
Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!

I hid beside a cliff,  
I hid in a cave,  
I said to myself,  
'I must be brave!'

Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!  
Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!

I hid in a gully,  
I hid in a creek,  
Every day  
Was hide-and-go-seek.

Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!

I hid in a gutter,  
I hid in a sewer,  
All my companions  
Getting fewer and fewer.

Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!  
Dead as a dodo?  
No no! No no!

## THE DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS

I'm unique,  
It's my beak!  
Or – if you prefer – my bill...  
It gives everyone a thrill!

I may seem to be a freak  
(Because of my beak)  
But, actually, I'm unique.  
I've even been called an antique!

Indeed – if I may dare –  
I would call myself quite rare!  
You see, it's my bill – or my beak –  
Which I beg you not to tweak!

## THE TALE OF A RAT

It's not easy being a rat,  
You could end up just like that - Splat!  
How hard it is to be a rat.  
Why wasn't I born a fat  
Cat?

And yet... I like being a rat,  
Even though sometimes I'm spat  
At!

## LETTER FROM A MOUSE

Dear Friend,  
(You can skip this and go to the end):  
As you can see, I am out of breath,  
This is a matter of life and death.  
Please, please  
Please send some cheese.

French blue would be fine  
And a little drop of wine.

If you have some cheddar  
All the better.

Just, please.  
Send cheese.

If it has holes, I don't mind,  
Oh, by the way, I'm fond of the rind.  
I don't care if it's smelly!  
Can't you hear my rumbling belly?  
Please, please,  
Send cheese.

It can be dreamy  
Or soft and creamy

Swiss  
Would be bliss.

I could say much  
About Dutch.

From a sheep, or a goat, or a cow,  
Just send it anyhow.  
It can be yellow or green  
(I don't care where it's been).

White?  
That's alright.

Write to me soon, if you please.  
(P.S. Don't forget the cheese).



## CENTIPEDE

A centipede  
Is not known for its speed

But she has a hundred legs  
And can lay eggs

Not bad? Pretty good, I'd say!  
How many eggs can you lay?

A centipede...  
Indeed.

Every time a centipede wiggles  
The earth giggles  
And says: 'Tickle me some more!  
Tickle me to the core!'

The earth needs  
Its centipedes.

GABRIEL ROSENSTOCK is a poet, author/translator of over 150 books, mostly in Irish. He taught haiku at the Schule für Dichtung (Poetry Academy) in Vienna. Among his awards is the Tamgha I Kidmat medal for services to literature.

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